

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."

Well, I don't know about YOU, but I have a difficult time coming to a memorial service with an untroubled heart. My heart is troubled by death, any death. "Why," I ask God, "do you allow death?"

Oh, my logic-brain knows why death is necessary. Without the change aging and death bring, our world would be static. Either static or used up, with more and more people even than we have right now. People in a lot of the sciences are working on how to eliminate death, working either directly or indirectly to crack THAT human problem. None of them talk about what we are going to do with a planet-full of immortal people.



THAT troubles my heart also, because we can bet, based on human history, that only the rich will get a worldly "death cure," if one is ever developed. Based on human history, rich or poor, few of us in this room would even be allowed to apply for a science-based "death cure." THAT's something ELSE that troubles my heart.

But I digress. Knowing the logical answers about why God allows death doesn't reduce my anger and fear when I AM THE ONE who is confronting my own mortality. Even knowing that our physical death is necessary for us to return to our Creator doesn't ease my grieving heart when someone I know and love dies.

Oh, we console ourselves. We grieve more at the death of a young person than an old one—unless the person who dies is our beloved parent or grandparent. We factor in quality of life. We tell ourselves, futilely, that our deceased loved one "is in a better place." Then we worry that they might not be. We hope to be reunited one day on the other side of death.

To all this Jesus simply says, **"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."** I can hear the addendum, "Yes grieve, a result of love and loss, but trust in God; trust in me, Christ Jesus. All will be well."

We who have turned our selves and all that we have over to Christ here in this life can nod their heads about trusting in God, trusting in Jesus. WE KNOW that we have been “washed by the blood of the Lamb,” as we say. We know that Jesus’ death on the cross redeemed us, redeemed all our sins, when we believe and repent and turn to the Lord. We who have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior can rest assured that we will NOT be resting in death, but with our Maker.

But what about those who don’t seem to have professed Christ here in this life? What about THEM?

Not here, not today, not with US, but others might say, “Wait, Beatrice Goldsby Morgan didn’t go to church, didn’t claim God in this life, didn’t seem to ally herself with Christ Jesus.” Our gospel lesson today clearly says, ‘No one comes to [God] except through [Christ Jesus].’” So, what about Bea?

I acknowledge this is a sticky point. But we are not in a position to judge. Only Christ Jesus knows whether Bea Goldsby Morgan LIVED Christ Jesus. Why do you think Jesus included in this very conversation the assurance, “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places?”

There’s also a parable Jesus told on another day about some vineyard workers being hired very late in the day. And these workers got the very same pay that the workers received who had worked all day. Who are WE to say what happened last Monday when Beatrice Goldsby Morgan met Jesus?

We know that Bea HAS now met Christ Jesus, face to face. We know from John’s gospel (5:19-23) that God has delegated judgement to Jesus. We know from Acts (17:29-31) that God will judge the world **with justice** through the one he appointed, that one being Christ Jesus. We know from Paul’s letter to the Romans (2:16) that God judges people’s secrets through Christ Jesus. The idea here is that we don’t know another person’s heart, but Christ Jesus does. We even get a great clue from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah (45:23) who says that every knee will bow before the Messiah, who we know to be Christ Jesus.

My favorite passage on this subject, though, is in Philippians (2:5-11) in what is known as the “Christ Prayer.” This is the earliest known Christian liturgy, a prayer or hymn used during worship. This passage says that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

I could go on and on, but I won’t. Here is the basis for Jesus’ assurance to us, **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.”** This is for US, so that we can be assured that OUR judgments about the state of others’ relationships with God are not what should concern us. Jesus said, in effect, “Don’t worry, I’ve got this.”

What should concern us is the state of OUR relationship with Christ Jesus. What I've shared today is speculative—truth be told, everything we postulate about what happens after death is speculative, except as taught by Jesus. What we KNOW for certain is that we need to believe in God and his Son Christ Jesus for life everlasting, and it would behoove us to believe on THIS SIDE of death, when the outcome is very clear.

As for Beatrice Goldsby Morgan, "Let not your hearts be troubled." Christ Jesus knows the joy and love that was in her heart, shown and shared by her actions toward others, her love of children, and her many kindnesses. Put grief aside, if only for a little while today and "let not your hearts be troubled.:" then join us in celebrating Bea's life by giving thanks to God for lending her to us these 98 years.